

Zion Methodist Church



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A History of Zion Methodist Church

of

Seaford, York County, Virginia

by

Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger

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INTRODUCTION

The resolution adopted by the 1964 General Conference called for the Bicentennial Celebration of Methodism in 1966. It was suggested as part of the Celebration that some person interested in local church history determine the date of the church's origin and then write its history. We are indebted to Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger for her interest and efforts in writing the history of Zion Methodist Church.

signed: (Rev.) Harwood B. Owen

Seaford, Virginia.

June 20, 1966.

FOREWORD

If anyone should raise the question, "Why would a history of Zion Methodist Church in Seaford, Virginia be compiled and written in 1966?" this Foreword is designed to give the answer.

The Bicentennial Historical Observance of American Methodism which is being celebrated this year, 1966, is the official program of the Methodist Church, planned by action of the 1960 General Conference and implemented by the 1964 General Conference. Its purpose is to launch a year of historical study and appreciation and should be observed in every Methodist church with a meaningful, spiritual interpretation of our Methodist Heritage. General plans called for celebrations on the National basis, at State Conferences, District wide, and locally.

On the National level, a general church convocation Bicentennial celebration took place at Baltimore, Maryland, April 21-24, 1966 on a grand scale. Foremost Methodist speakers of National renown were on the program which was climaxed by the attendance of the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson and an address by him. There were more than a thousand Methodists from this nation and abroad in attendance. The committee pointed out that in 1866 the Methodist Church's Membership numbered less than 2,000,000 in the United States, as against today's 10,300,000.

While other State Methodist Conferences were planning and holding bicentennial celebrations, the Virginia Conference centered its special observance at Leesburg, Va. on May 15, 1966. The Sunday nearest the 200th anniversary of the issuance of the deed to the Old Stone Church, the first Methodist church property in America, was the time chosen for the Virginia Conference celebration. May 11, 1766 is a key date in American Methodist history when the deed to Lot 50 at Cornwall and Bock (now Wirt) Streets in the town of Leesburg was issued to Robert Hamilton for "no other use than for a church or meeting-house and grave yard." The deed, which is preserved in the Loudoun County Court-house, is one of the

treasures of Methodist history. The Old Stone Church site is owned by the Virginia Conference Historical Society.

When the Virginia Conference held its annual meeting in Norfolk June 13-16, 1966, Bicentennial Night was emphasized on Monday evening, with an address by Dr. J. Manning Potts of Nashville, Tennessee, and a display of Methodist artifacts by Dr. T. H. Crowder of South Boston. Among the items shown, was a 1630 Bible, reputed to have belonged to John Wesley. Pottery and ceramic busts of Francis Asbury, George Whitefield and John Wesley were included in the display.

Perhaps the earliest celebrations in the year of 1966 took place as District rites, in the sixteen districts of the Virginia Conference. On the Peninsula District, the observance was held in the afternoon of January 13, (1966), at the annual district conference at Grace Church, Newport News. The District Chairman, Rev. Oliver K. Brooke was in charge. He told the Conference, briefly, of the launching of the year of historical study and appreciation, cited the oldest churches on Peninsula District, Williamsburg Circuit, established in 1785, Hampton in 1789 which was a part of Williamsburg Circuit, and of the youngest church on the district, St. Luke's at Grafton-Bethel. Mrs. C. C. Casey presented some highlights of Williamsburg Methodism, Rev. Wilson Stanley told briefly of Hampton Methodism's early beginnings, and Rev. Henry Suddeth represented St. Luke's.

The bicentennial celebrations in many local churches of the Virginia Conference during this year have been meaningful and inspiring. Many of them have been reported in the Methodist Advocate. Founder's Day at First Methodist Church, Hampton, commemorative programs in Methodist Churches of Winchester, Alexandria, Arlington, Richmond, Loudoun and Fairfax Counties and many more, have shown the keen interest of Methodists throughout our Virginia Conference, in their heritage of Methodism. Other local church observances are planned for the latter half of 1966.

During the conference-year 1965-66 just prior to the advent of the New Year, Zion Methodist Church had it's Founders Day program, when it's pastor, Rev. H. B. Owen conducted a dedication service for the earliest mementos of Zion Church. These had been assembled and placed on display in the church foyer. The oldest relic is the book of Quarterly Conference Minutes which dates from 1850. This book of 285 pages was copied by hand in 1952 and a typist was hired to make a copy for each of the four churches of York charge. The original book was placed in the Methodist Archives at Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, and the typed copy belonging to Zion church was enclosed in a cardboard folder from 1952 until the spring of 1965 when it was sent to Major John Garland Ironmonger in Saigon, South Viet Nam to be bound in leather.

Accompanying this book was the oldest Bible now extant, purchased about 1890. The Ironmongers had this old Bible restored and bound in leather to match the binding of the old Minutes book. The restoration and preservation of these two old books is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger.

After the Civil War when Zion church and its furnishings were destroyed, the members had to rely on certain makeshift articles to use for the Communion service. It was about 1895, when Miss Maggie Crooks, daughter of the Rev. R. N. Crooks a former pastor of Zion, York charge, boarded in Crab Neck and taught in the public school. She saw Zion's need for a set of Communion Ware, and assumed the task of soliciting funds from the local people with which to purchase the silver set. This communion silver was in constant use at Zion until 1919 when Mr. and Mrs. James J. Cheadle gave the individual communion service presently being used. Even then the plate and baptismal font were used until recently. Mrs. Cheadle was the sister of Mr. James Dawson, Communion steward of Zion, and when the old silver was withdrawn from service it was in the keeping of Mr. Dawson and later his daughter, Mrs. Walker Whitehead. It was Mrs. Whitehead who was responsible for the assembling of the six pieces of the old communion ware and she has preserved the tradition

that "Miss Maggie" or Mrs. Margaret Crook Smith took the initiative in collecting the necessary funds with which to purchase Zion's post-Civil War communion pieces.

This collection of Zion's mementos required a cabinet in which to be placed. When plans were in the making for such an article of church furniture, Mrs. Lewis Edward Davis of Zion, offered to purchase the cabinet as a Memorial to her late husband, and as a cooperative gesture in the care of these precious symbols of Zion church. The cabinet is a gift from Mrs. Davis. The assembling of these articles was done for the benefit of Zion church, and to the glory of God. The chairman of the Official Board, Mr. Roy Mathis received the gifts on behalf of the church.

Among the general plans handed down by the Virginia Conference to the individual churches for further observance of the Bicentennial year was that of writing the history of each local church, or bringing it up-to-date. It was suggested that the Official Board activate the church committee on Records and History, which should be responsible for preparing, preserving and adding to your church history. The Official Board of Zion Church has taken such action; Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger, chairman, and Mrs. William S. Wornom, member of the committee on Records and History, have been duly elected and Mrs. Ironmonger was named church historian.

While the theme for the celebration is, "Forever Beginning", it seems appropriate to remind our-selves of the Motto adopted by Colonial Williamsburg Inc., "That the Future may learn from the Past," and apply its directive to our efforts at Zion Methodist Church, Seaford, as we review our Methodist heritage, for "Time marches on" --- in our churches too. It was Patrick Henry who said, "I know of no way to judge the future except by the past."

Thus, the foregoing remarks set forth the events leading up to the preparation of a history of Zion Methodist Church, 1822-1966.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger
Church Historian

June 1966

ZION METHODIST CHURCH

A SUMMARY, 1822-1949

The records of Zion Methodist Church, from 1822 through 1959 were included in Methodism in York County, Virginia by this author, and published in 1960. The events of the last few years should now be recorded. However, it seems appropriate that a summary of Zion's early years of service should precede the writing of the later chapters in order that the chronological story may be complete under one binding. Such a summary based on the material used in the former publication follows:

In 1822 a group of interested persons in Crab Neck, Virginia made an effort to organize a Methodist Church in that area. Land was given and a board of trustees was formed. This was the beginning of Zion Church. The deed, which is recorded in York County Deed Book 9, page 344, states that "A half acre of land was given by Thomas and Anna Stroud and William and Frances Stroud to Joseph Crockett, James Ironmonger, Cyrus B. James, Robert Thompkins, Charles Ironmonger, William Guy and William Morgan, trustees, in trust --- with boundaries marked --- to them and their successors in office forever --- that they shall erect and build thereon, a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. This indenture was made the 20th day of December, 1822."

Zion became a part of the Williamsburg circuit, James River district, whose pastor in 1822 was Waddell Johnson. It has been generally accepted that much of the preaching of the early Methodists in local communities was carried on by local preachers, under the guidance and leadership of the circuit ministers. One such local preacher was the Rev. Cyrus B. James, born in that part of Gloucester county that later became Mathews. He married in Mathews county in 1811 and located in Poquoson, York county. He was licensed and made a local deacon in 1811. He took a leading part in the establishment of Zion church, being one of the first trustees, as has already been mentioned in the deed; he was one of the first preachers,

if not the first, to hold services at Zion church, coming by boat from Poquoson to Crab Neck.

Other ministers of Williamsburg circuit, who had supervision of the worship services at Zion were: Robert Wilkerson in 1823; John F. Andrew, 1824; John Kerr and Richard D. Merriweather in 1825; James Morrison, 1826; William W. McClun, 1827; Christopher Thomas and Vernon Eskridge in 1828; William S. Peyton and Robert I. Carson in 1829; S. Harrell and D. Wood in 1830.

In 1831 there were three preachers for the Williamsburg circuit, George A. Bain, James A. Brown and William S. Peyton, who alternated their services among the Methodist congregations of the territory which embraced, roughly, James City, York, Warwick and Elizabeth City counties. Henry Alley and Benjamin Watson were the ministers for 1832; George Mahood, 1833; Jervis M. Keesee and John T. St. Clair in 1834; J. P. Davidson, 1835; W. H. Kelly, 1836; James W. Honeycutt, 1837; James D. Coulling in 1838 and 1839; Jacob Manning and Reuben Jones in 1840; Jacob Manning again and H. H. Garey in 1841; and Joseph Lear in 1842.

In 1843, the Methodist churches in York and Warwick counties were taken from Williamsburg circuit and became the York and Warwick circuit with James B. L. Williams, 1843-44, their minister. The name of the James River district had been changed in 1834 to Richmond district, as it had been prior to 1808, so the Zion church in 1843-44 was a part of York and Warwick circuit, Richmond district. Humphrey Billups in 1844-45 and Benjamin F. Woodward in 1845-46, were the last pastors of the circuit under the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The record for the year 1846 was taken from the Conference minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The next pastor for York and Warwick was William Lee in 1846-47. From then until 1939 when unification of the three great branches of Methodism came together and made the Methodist Church, Zion was a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In 1847-48 G. W. Andrews was pastor; 1848-49 and 1849-50 John S. Briggs; 1850-51 and 1851-52 George W. Trimyer; 1852-53 and 1853-54 William A. Robinson

served York and Warwick circuit. At the annual Virginia Conference in the autumn of 1854 York and Warwick Circuit was divided and reports for the churches in York County were listed as York Circuit.

The following ministers served York Circuit from 1854 until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861: David W. Laney, 1854-55; Humphrey Billups, 1855-56; A. M. Hall, 1856-57; James E. Joyner, 1857-58; William A. Robinson, 1858-59; A. M. Hall, 1859-60; B. T. Amos 1860-61. Rev. Amos who came to the circuit in the fall of 1860 stayed about half the year. He conducted the first and second Quarterly Conferences and left. There was no third Conference. Rev. George W. Trimyer, who had married a York County girl and had located in York, finished the year's work. The final report before the Civil War on the condition of the church building read: "October 30, 1861, the trustees of Zion beg leave to report that their church is out of debt but in bad condition; there is a full board of trustees." When the fourth Quarterly Conference for York Circuit was held October 30, 1861, there came to a close the regular worship services in the York County Methodist churches and Quarterly Conferences were suspended. A blank page in the old York-Warwick Conference Minutes book (1852-1879) gave mute testimony to that fact. Most of the men were away from their homes, engaged in the conflict of the Civil War.

Zion church in Crab Neck, York county, was destroyed by the Northern Army between 1861 and 1865. The report of the Richmond district at the Virginia Annual Conference in 1864 said: "Peninsula Mission, no report: Virginia Conference 1864." The Annual Conference Volume of the M. E. Church, South, 1858-1865 recorded the following: "1863; 1864; 1865; York sent no report." A newspaper clipping of that time stated that "Rev. John W. Shield, local deacon, during the last three years of the war, was the only Southern minister on the Peninsula, below Williamsburg, where he rendered good service, as far as he had permission to do."

In 1865 Rev. Robert N. Crooks of Kentucky, a Chaplain in the Southern Army, was sent to the Peninsula "to look after the scattered and returning Methodists." He was sent to York and Hampton Circuits in November, 1865, where he served three

years, 1865-66; 1866-67; 1867-68. The first Quarterly Conference on York Circuit, after the war, met on March 17, 1866. One item of business was the selection and appointment of a "Committee of five, appointed from Zion, namely, Brothers Cary W. Crockett, Cyrus Wesley James, S. D. Ironmonger, John F. White and Fred P. Crockett, to take measures towards building a church in Crab Neck." A small budget of \$340. was planned, Zion's part being \$100.00. The record stated: "Our Preacher's board is provided for, among the membership." Thus the pastor and his family moved once a month from the home of a family of members, to another family group. This plan was in effect two years or more.

The fourth Quarterly Conference met November 10, 1866, in Zion Church. This record establishes the time of the rebuilding of Zion Church. The lumber used in the construction of this second Zion Church-building was brought from Old Point by Samuel D. Ironmonger on his Chesapeake Bay Canoe. It was salvaged material from a dismantled Barracks building of the Northern Army. In June 1867 the Judge of the circuit court of York appointed replacements for Zion's board of trustees. They were: "Frederick P. Crockett in the place of Peter Shield, deceased; William Montgomery in the place of Benjamin Wright, deceased; and Samuel D. Ironmonger in the place of Cyrus Wesley James, deceased". The board of trustees has been revised many times in the years 1867-1949, the records of which may be found in the York County court volumes.

In the fall of 1868 Rev. J. D. Lumsden became the pastor of York Circuit and Hampton. A house was rented in Hampton to serve as a parsonage, the Stewards estimated the cost of the necessary articles of house-keep-ing at \$150. and "apportioned to each church the amount to pay for same". Zion's part was \$34. The Pastor's salary was set at \$600. and his traveling expenses at \$25. Rev. Lumsden served the combined area of York County Methodism's three churches and Hampton and Fox Hill, two years. At the 1870 Annual Conference two preachers were assigned this field, the Rev. Joseph Leah being sent to York Circuit, while the Rev. J. D. Lumsden went with the Hampton Circuit. The parsonage furniture was

divided according to the amount expended by each church. Presumably, a house was rented in York County for a parsonage.

In 1871 Rev. Robert N. Crooks replaced Rev. Joseph Leah as pastor of York charge. Additional furniture was purchased in the amount of \$111.56 and a committee set about to buy or build a parsonage. On April 26, 1873 "a contract for the purchase of the lot and residence of Rev. George W. Trimyer at Cockletown" was presented at Quarterly Conference, an agreement was made and the property was deeded to the six trustees. The pastor and his family moved into their new home immediately.

A more detailed account of the growth and expansion of York Charge, and Zion church, from the Civil War to the present time may be found in Methodism in York County, Virginia, by Mrs. Elizabeth Hogg Ironmonger, and a repetition of these facts is unnecessary in this summary. A list of pastors of Zion (York Circuit) from this period follows:

Rev. Robert N. Crook's second period of service ran for four years, 1871-75; Rev. B. C. Speller 1875-79; Rev. J. T. Dalby 1879-82; Rev. J. W. Crown 1882-83; Rev. J. S. Morris 1883-84; Rev. J. E. McSparran 1884-86; Rev. Charles Taylor 1886-90; Rev. J. E. Potts, 1890-94; Rev. Charles E. Hobday 1894-97; Rev. J. S. Wallace 1897-98; Rev. L. F. Phaup 1898-1901, and Rev. J. H. Nicholson 1901-02. He was the last pastor to serve the four churches of York Circuit. At the Annual Conference in the fall of 1902 Tabernacle and Trinity Churches in Poquoson were taken off York Circuit and made the East York Circuit, while Providence and Zion made the York Circuit, each circuit having a full time pastor. The parsonage in Cockletown, (name changed to Grafton) was retained as the home of the York Circuit Minister.

In November 1902 the Rev. J. W. Baker came to York county as pastor and he was able to be in much closer touch with all of his members than other ministers had been, because of the smaller area embraced in the circuit. He stayed three years and during his ministry Zion church was enlarged, by the addition of a wing on each side, thus changing the shape of the building from rectangular to the form of a

cross. Rev. Baker was followed by the Rev. John R. Eggleston in the fall of 1905. His term of service to Zion and Providence churches was four years, 1905-09. Other pastors were: Rev. E. P. Farham 1909-11; Rev. C. W. Turner, 1911-12; Rev. W. C. Bates, Jr. 1912-13; Rev. T. C. Pullen, 1913-17. There was considerable growth in membership and program at Zion under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Pullen. York Circuit was transferred from Rappahannock District to Norfolk District in 1913, during the pastorate of Mr. Pullen. Dr. George Wesley Jones was the Presiding Elder. When the Pullen family left York in 1917 Rev. A. B. Warwick came as a supply preacher for one year. The minister who had been assigned to this field, stayed less than a month because his wife was unhappy with a rural assignment. It was then that Mr. Warwick took over the work. At that time the membership at Zion numbered 242.

The next pastor of Zion church, York charge was the Rev. D. W. Jackson who came to York county in November, 1918 and served four years. In April 1919 the trustees of Zion church were authorized to purchase the school house and land across the road, opposite Zion, from the county school trustees for \$325. (York Co. Deed Bk. 36: p493). Later the church trustees sold the school building at a public sale. It was also during the pastorate of Rev. Jackson that Zion church was remodeled and enlarged. The work was begun in the fall of 1919 and was completed in the summer of 1920. A cast iron bell was hung in the belfry and was the first bell at Zion, to peal, announcing church services. In November, 1922 Rev. Jackson and family were sent to Mathews County and the Rev. J. D. Hosier came to York circuit where he labored effectively for two years.

December 22, 1922 marked the one hundredth anniversary of Zion church. There was no celebration of this important event. The new pastor and wife had arrived only six weeks prior to the anniversary date, was not aware of its significance, and so he went about his regular pastoral duties, with no thought of a special celebration. The Official Board and the members, likewise, did not realize that it was the centennial year of their church, and the opportunity to make of this

date a red letter event, was lost.

The Rev. J. T. Sewell followed Rev. Hosier in 1925 and stayed two years. Other ministers have been Dr. S. J. Brown 1927 to March 1929; Rev. Harry F. Justice 1929-32; Rev. J. T. Mills 1932-36; Rev. Paul R. Best, 1936-38; Rev. Eugene W. Rawlings 1938-40; Rev. O. R. Clarke, 1940-44; Rev. Mack Thomasson 1944-45; Rev. Merrill H. Barton, 1945-50.

Dr. Brown died suddenly at the parsonage in Grafton in March, 1929. The prompt arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Justice and family, prevented any break in the ongoing of the churches' program on York Circuit.

In 1939-40, during the pastorate of the Rev. Eugene Rawlings, a new parsonage for York was built on property adjoining the old parsonage lawn, in Grafton. Part of the tract of land belonging to the parsonage had been sold some years before, and after the erection of the new parsonage the old house and lawn were sold to Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Crockett.

It was during the pastorate of the Rev. Merrill Barton that the new Zion church plant was begun. A letter dated October 4th, 1946, addressed to "Rev. M. H. Barton, Grafton, Va." is on file. It said: "Dear Brother Barton, - Pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 258, Discipline of 1944, I hereby endorse the plans of Zion Church, York Charge, for the building of a new house of worship and an educational building on a lot across the road from the building now being used by the congregation. In my judgement the site is well chosen, and the financial plan is sound. Trusting that the Building committee can get this work under way at some early date, I am Yours Cordially - Frank L. Wells, D. D. District Superintendent."

A period of much activity and progress at Zion Methodist Church in Seaford, Virginia was manifested between the receipt of Dr. Frank L. Wells' letter of October 4, 1946 and the annual report of the pastor, the Rev. Merrill H. Barton in 1950. The four intervening years had been filled with prayerful studying, planning, the raising of funds and the actual construction of the third Zion Church building, located across the road from the original site. Plans for the structure, of Colonial design, were drawn by Albert Koch, Delineator and Designer of Williamsburg. E. C. Lund, mechanical engineer, also of Williamsburg planned the plumbing and electrical fixtures.

The building is of rough-texture brick, with solid walls 17 inches thick and was valued at approximately \$100,000.00 when completed. It comprised a sanctuary 40 feet by 75 feet with a seating capacity of 375. The two choir lofts were balanced by a balcony in the rear.

The section for the church school is 30 feet by 86 feet and is three stories high. There are 13 class rooms ranging in size from 10 x 14 feet to 13 x 30 feet, a church parlor, social hall, nursery, kitchen, rest rooms on each floor and pastor's study.^①

The lot on which the new church was built was a part of the G. A. Wornom estate and was given by the family. This joined the original church property, part of which was used as a parking area and part as a church cemetery. The building committee members, responsible for the plans and construction were the Rev. Merrill H. Barton, pastor, the Rev. John T. Mills, chairman, Grady L. Montgomery, Wm. S. Wornom, Leonard Davis, Harvey Shields, Charles W. Mills, Howard Sparrer, Mrs. George Mills and Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger.

On August 23, 1949 ground was broken for the beginning of the actual construction.^②

The Henry Tyssen Construction Co. of Williamsburg supervised the erection of the building and J. Wesley Ironmonger, great-grand-son of two of the first trustees (1822) was the builder. Much gift labor went into its construction. During the next nine months all exterior work was completed. The cornerstone for the new edifice was laid during appropriate ceremonies May 27, 1950 with more than 300 members and church officials attending. Wielding the trowel at the ceremony was Bishop W. W. Peele, D.D., presiding Bishop of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church. He was assisted by Raymond White and J. W. Ironmonger.

During an hour long service held in the old church prior to the stone-setting, Bishop Peele told the congregation, "We must give special attention to building higher things in our lives so that our lives are directed by the very highest motives." He warned that it was too easy to give attention to the material things in life. "We do not think as much as we should of that part of our lives that direct and control and gives significance to our total personality," he said. "The church is one institution which stands eternally and unequivocally for a religious form of life."

remarking on the construction, Bishop Peele said no one wanted to take credit for the building, adding, "it means probably ~~all~~ of you deserve credit." "We can accomplish a great deal in this life if we don't care who gets the credit for it," he pointed out. "The church," he said, "is an investment that brings great returns."

Bishop Peele was introduced by Dr. Frank L. Wells, Superintendent of the Norfolk District. In his comment on the new church Dr. Wells said, "the beauty of God got into the work of your hands."

A copper records box, made by Roland Montgomery, was placed in the cornerstone. It was presented to Bishop Peele by the Rev. J. T. Mills, retired pastor of Zion Methodist Church. He referred to the box as "posterity's treasure box." It contained a Bible from the Stroud family, descendants of the donors of the

original church property; a family hymn book dated 1883 of the family of J. J. Ironmonger; pictures of the old building and pictures of stages in the progress of work on the new church; a copy of the church history-sketch; a list of official organizations of the church and a copy of the cornerstone program.

The Rev. Merrill H. Barton, pastor, opened the service and introduced Dr. Walter C. Gum, pastor of Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, who gave the scripture lesson and prayer. Dr. Gum said the new church "would do honor to any rural section that I know of."⁽³⁾

On September 23, 1950 the fourth Quarterly Conference for York charge was held. The Pastor made the following report:

"An attitude of true devotion characterized our people as we come to the end of another conference year. We are witnessing the fruition of long cherished dreams in the erection of the new church at Seaford. I am most grateful for the splendid loyalty and regular support of the whole program of the church, given the pastor throughout another conference year. I feel that it has been our happiest and best year of the five happy years we have been here. May God continually bless these good people." (signed) Rev. M. H. Barton.⁽⁴⁾ Zion had a membership of 472 reported at this quarterly conference. The next three weeks were spent in completing last minute details of the conference year.

Among the events of this period was the presentation and dedication of the new Hammond church organ. This took place on October 1, 1950⁽⁵⁾ and was conducted by the pastor, Rev. Barton. Mrs. W. W. Crockett, chairman of the Organ committee, made the presentation and the pastor's acceptance remarks were followed by the responses of the congregation and the dedication by Mr. Barton who said, "Labor, even the most humble and the most obscure, if it is well done, tends to beautify and embellish the world." (D'Annungio). This quotation from the old Italian

patriot poet reminds us of how our church and its services have been made so much more beautiful by the labors of those who have worked for it. Our thanks go to those members and friends of the church who have made their contributions to the organ fund. The names of the organ committee who have worked as collectors are: Mrs. W. W. Crockett, chairman, Mrs. Wm. S. Wornom, Mrs. Aubrey Stroud, Mrs. James Hogge, Paul Sparrer, Virginia DeAlba, Mrs. Thelma Hansford, Peggy Gillikin, Mrs. J. F. Westcott, Anna Jane Hansford and Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger. We all appreciate their help as leaders in this project, and join with them in rejoicing that we now have Our fine new organ, so easily movable to, and suitable for, use in our splendid new church" (The Pastor).

The annual conference met at the Mosque Theater, Richmond, Virginia, October 19, 1950. G. E. Purgold was the delegate. When the appointments were read on Monday, October 23, 1950 the Rev. Oscar S. Good was assigned to York Methodist Charge which included Zion Church as its Pastor.

Rev. and Mrs. Oscar Good and two daughters, Man and Carolyn, moved into the Methodist parsonage in Grafton and the first Sunday in November 1950 he took up his duties, holding worship services at Zion church.

The first Quarterly Conference of the church year 1950-51 was held January 6, 1951. The new pastor made his first report which told of progress especially in the plans for an early opening of the new church edifice.

As the spring advanced many members of the church gave their services in completing the interior of the building, until it was decided that it was ready for occupancy and the big day was selected.

On Sunday, May 20, 1951 the Zion congregation moved out of the old building on the south side of Seaford Road and into the new Zion Church-building across the road. Sunday School was held in the morning and the formal opening exercises

took place at 2:00 P.M. The pastor, the Rev. Oscar Good was in charge of the service. After the preliminaries, some of the former ministers were recognized; Miss Frances Waymack of Richmond sang, "Bless This House" and after acknowledgements and announcements, the sermon was delivered by Dr. Edgar A. Potts, District Superintendent. At 5:00 P.M. the first funeral in the new sanctuary, that of Wm. W. Crockett, was conducted. The same evening, revival services began, and were conducted through the week. Twenty-five new members were added to the church.

The first marriage performed in the new sanctuary was that of Charles Wesley Hopkins of Poquoson and Miss Betty Gray Mills of Seaford, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Mills. This took place September 15, 1951.

When the pastor attended the annual Methodist Conference October 17-22, in Roanoke, Va. he carried the recommendation that Zion church wished to become a station and thus leave the York Methodist Charge. There had been a church conference held on July 1, 1951 when the membership expressed this desire and the action thus announced at Annual Conference completed the change.

The Rev. Good was returned to Zion on October 28 as the pastor of Zion Methodist Church for the 1951-52 year.

At the first Board of Stewards meeting, held January 23, 1952, the following petition was prepared to be presented at the forthcoming Quarterly Conference:

"To the Quarterly Conference of Zion Methodist Church at Seaford, Virginia, of the former York Circuit, Norfolk District, Virginia Annual Conference, now a Station, having been so constituted by the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in session at Roanoke, Va., October 17-22, 1951, convening at Zion Methodist Church, Seaford, Va.

Convened in due and regular order we, the members of the Building Committee for the new Zion Church-building which is now occupied, believing we have faithfully and completely performed this sacred commission conferred upon us by the

aforesaid Quarterly Conference do, therefore, request this Quarterly Conference to discharge us as having fully completed our assignment as said Building Committee and thereby relieve the Building Committee of all obligations and responsibilities as such a committee.

That the said church building be committed to the Board of Trustees of said church with full obligation and responsibility of said Board of Trustees as set forth in the Discipline of the Methodist Church.

We request this petition be made a part of the Quarterly Conference record. A copy of same will be incorporated in the minutes of the Building Committee. Signed by the Secretary as directed by the Committee, this 23rd day of January 1952."

The second Quarterly Conference of Zion Church for 1952 was held February 17, at which time the committee was discharged. (6)

Zion Church entertained the Norfolk District Conference on April 15 with about 200 in attendance. The morning session was called to order at 9:30 by Dr. E. A. Potts, District Superintendent. The last thing on the agenda concerned the oldest records book of the Methodist Churches of York County. The old York-Warwick charge Quarterly Conference records 1850-1879 and the church register were displayed and it was stated by the District Superintendent that they should be placed in the archives of Virginia Methodist at Randolph Macon College, Ashland, Va., and copies be typed for the four Methodist churches, Zion, Providence, Tabernacle and Trinity. This was done and on Sunday, July 20 the two original church record books were placed in the hands of Dr. J. Earl Moreland, President of Randolph Macon College, at Zion, where he was guest speaker for the Sunday morning service. Dr. Moreland carried the books with him, back to the college where they were placed in the air-conditioned vaults of the Library.

Zion church was host on August 10, 1952 to forty foreign students, from about twenty different countries. These students were spending a six weeks' orientation

period at the college of William and Mary in Williamsburg and were being entertained in homes in the Seaford area over the weekend. The pastor, Rev. Good was on vacation and the morning service was conducted by Melvin Johnson, a ministerial student, assisted by some of Zion's young men.

The conference year closed the first of October and the Minister and delegate attended Annual Conference at Norfolk, October 9-13, 1952, when the following report was given for Zion Church: "8 infants baptized during the year; total full membership 480; estimated value of church buildings, equipment and land, \$200,000.00; value of parsonage \$11,500.00 and an indebtedness of \$18,000.00.

Mr. Good was assigned as Zion's pastor for the third year, 1952-53.

The new dark red choir robes were purchased the first of the year and on February 8, 1953 the choir members wore them for the first time at the Sunday morning worship service.

On March 19 the class of children who were being instructed by the pastor were received into church membership. There were 19 in the group.

In April Dr. Kenneth Haddock, the new District Superintendent, held the second Quarterly Conference at Zion. Plans for the forthcoming United Evangelistic Mission were released. The mission started on April 19 with the Rev. Gordon Chews of Maryland as guest speaker and ran for a week.

The old frame church building, built in 1866, enlarged in 1902, remodeled and enlarged again in 1919-20, had fulfilled its period of usefulness and the time had come for it to be razed, so on June 10, 1953 some of the men of Zion began the job of taking down the old building. Some of the material was salvaged by a resident of a neighboring community. The spot on which the first and second Zion church buildings had stood was carefully preserved and a permanent marker is now being erected (1966) on the sacred soil.

While the regular program of the church was going forward, another important

project came to the forefront in Zion's calendar of events. It was the building of a new parsonage. When the three churches of York Methodist Charge became stations in 1951 the parsonage property in Grafton which was owned jointly by the three churches had to be divided. Accordingly, Crook's Memorial and Providence sold their shares of the property to Zion Church; the pastor of Zion and his family continued to live in Grafton for the next two years. On July 1, 1953 a called Quarterly Conference was held at Zion when plans were formulated for the erection of a new parsonage in Seaford. The Official Board negotiated for a lot 80 x 150 feet adjoining the church lawn and a two-story brick structure with attached garage was built for the use of the minister's family, at a cost of \$19,000.00.

Zion church and the Seaford community entertained another group of 40 or more foreign students from the College of William and Mary on the weekend of August 16, 1953. The pastor, Rev. Oscar Good, conducted the morning worship service using the text "Love Thy Neighbors as Thyself."

The annual conference met October 14-18, 1953 in Roanoke and the report for Zion showed a gain of 32 members, making a total of 512; the church indebtedness was reduced \$8,000.00 and the value of the parsonage property in Grafton had deteriorated from \$11,500.00 to \$11,000.00. Mr. Good was re-assigned to Zion for the fourth year as it's pastor.

The church year 1953-54 was adjusted to a nine month's period due to the change of conference closing time, from October to May 31, with the next annual conference due to meet the second week in June.

A special community Thanksgiving service was held at Zion on November 25; the Rev. Robert Marriott of Grafton Christian Church, Rev. Marvin White of Providence and Rev. Douglas Williams of Trinity, Poquoson assisted Rev. Good in the service.

The work on the new parsonage advanced in a most satisfactory manner through the fall and winter of '53-'54 and it was ready to be occupied by spring. On March 19, 1954 Rev. and Mrs. Good and family moved from the old parsonage in Grafton into the new, commodious, modern brick dwelling next door to Zion church.

Having been worshipping in the new church building for three years, it was decided that a Homecoming celebration should be planned. Committees were appointed, invitations were printed and circulated for a gala celebration to take place on Sunday, May 23, 1954. The morning worship service was conducted by Rev. Good. This text was taken from Acts 24: "and now Lord, look upon their threats and grant to thy servant to speak the word boldly." The dinner, served from the social hall and carried to picnic tables on the lawn, was bounteous and delectable. The words of welcome were given by the Rev. John T. Mills, retired pastor of Zion. He said: "This is an extraordinary occasion, in that it combines the past with the present thus making a whole which would not be perfect, one without the other. I am thinking of the saints of old who achieved greatly by the gift of their time and talent and self and brought forth this church. I say to you now, the group who now carry on this great enterprise, continue until you shall pass on! And to you who have come today, a hearty and cordial welcome. Deep in our hearts we feel a debt of gratitude that you counted us worthy to come and add to our efforts your contribution, to make this a happy occasion."

Grady L. Montgomery, church treasurer, sketched briefly the progressive development of the present Zion church plant from its beginning in 1822 to the present, saying "it cost some of us some sweat, and it is a monument and a memorial to those who were involved. Always, we were seeking Divine Guidance."

A former pastor, the Rev. Harry F. Justice delivered the Homecoming sermon, based on Luke 1 on the topic, "What we, protestants ought to Believe."

"1st. We are saved by faith in Christ, and not by the Sacraments of the Church. In 1505 Martin Luther, studying the first chapter of Romans preached that "the just shall live by faith." One hundred and seventy-five years later John Wesley in reading scripture about the jailor was impressed by Paul's words, believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.

2nd. We should believe the Holy Scriptures as authority of the Word of God. The four Gospels, the sermon on the Mount, Paul's epistles are food for our souls.

3rd. Before God we are all equal. Not equal in ability, talent, or opportunity, but before God, we are all equal. Before God you are just as important as any living man.

4th. Every man and every woman is his or her own Priest. The church may disinherit you, may deny you the sacraments, may excommunicate you, but you can deal directly with God. You wouldn't have to call for a priest or your minister, or the church Board of Stewards or S. S. Superintendent. You can deal directly with God. Make your humble confession to Almighty God."

The choir rendered special music at both services, and Miss Frances Waymack of Richmond sang "Bless This House", and "The Lord's Prayer." Several hundred people attended the services.

Annual Conference met June 14-17, 1954 in Richmond when the pastor reported for Zion, six infants baptized; total membership 506; value of church property \$200,000.00; value of new parsonage \$30,000.00; total indebtedness \$18,000.00.

At the 1954 conference the Peninsula District of Methodist Churches was formed. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Twelve churches from Norfolk District, among them being Zion church of Seaford, and fourteen churches from Portsmouth-Newport News District were united in the new Peninsula District. Dr. W. P. Watkins was the first District Superintendent of Peninsula. The Rev. Good was returned to Zion as its minister for

1954-55, being his fifth year at Zion.

In the beginning of this conference year the Peninsula District Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized with Mrs. J. A. Ferguson of Hampton as the President. The installation service was held at Chestnut Ave. Methodist Church, Newport News on June 30, 1954 when Dr. W. P. Watkins, District Superintendent installed the officers. Zion's Woman's Society of Christian Service was honored to have given two District Officers, Mrs. William S. Wornom, Secretary of Missionary Personnel and Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger as District Secretary of Children's Work. (11)

On August 29, 1954 a dedication service was held at Zion to consecrate the gift of a baptismal font in memory of the late Mrs. Leona Leopold Hansford who was for many years teacher of the Young Women's Class in Zion Church School, a former member of the church choir, and at one time President of the Woman's Missionary Society. The font was a gift of Mrs. Hansford's nieces of Baltimore, Md. (12)

Revival services were held at Zion November 14-20, 1954. A former pastor, Rev. Harry Justice was guest speaker for the week's services. (13)

The Rev. and Mrs. Oscar Good celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary on April 30, 1955 with a reception at the parsonage. They were recipients of many lovely silver gifts. More than a hundred friends called on them during the afternoon and evening.

The second annual Homecoming Celebration at Zion took place on May 22, 1955. Dr. Edwin Sheppe of Trinity Methodist Church, Newport News was the guest speaker. Miss Bessie Conner was soloist in the morning and Miss Frances Waymack sang in the afternoon service. A large crowd attended the services.

The Virginia Annual Methodist Conference met in the Arena at Norfolk, Va. June 13-16, 1955. Harvey Shields, Lay Delegate accompanied the pastor, the Rev.

Good to the conference. The report for Zion showed a gain of fifteen members to the church roll; eleven infants baptized; value of church property \$200,000.00; value of parsonage and furnishings \$33,000.00; total indebtedness \$9,000.00 and a report of \$9,000.00 having been paid during the year. The pastor's salary was \$4,000.00. A grand total of \$22,744.00 paid out during the year was listed in the report, and the full church membership was 521. Rev. Good was re-assigned to Zion as pastor for the year 1955-56. (14)

Notes on Chapter 1; 1950-55

- (1) Description of the structure from article carried in the Methodist Advocate, March 2, 1950.
- (2) Date recorded in Methodism in York County by Ironmonger, page 88, and from personal diary record.
- (3) Quoted from newspaper clipping of Daily Press and Williamsburg Gazette, filed in Building Committee notes.
- (4) See Quarterly Conference record.
- (5) Program bulletin in possession of the writer.
- (6) From desk book for 1952 of the author.
- (7) Diary 1953.
- (8) Clipping Virginia Gazette July 3, 1953.
- (9) See Annual Va. Conference Minutes 1953.
- (10) See Annual Va. Conference Minutes 1953.
- (11) 1954 desk book.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Annual Va. Conference Minutes 1955.

Chapter 2 - 1955-60

The first activity of the new conference year 1955-56 at Zion Church was the Daily Vacation Bible School. This was planned for June, 1955. Teachers and workers had been selected some weeks in advance and the school was set up immediately following the close of public school. About 100 pupils attended. This was followed by Youth Activities Week for the Junior high age group. Later several young people attended Methodist Youth Camp.

The opportunity to entertain another group of foreign students was presented when, again the Seaford Woman's Club took the initiative in arranging for a weekend's entertainment of more than forty young students from 21 different countries who were taking orientation courses at the College of William and Mary. Members of twenty-one families of the Seaford area who were their hosts over the weekend, met the young people in Zion Social hall Saturday August 13, 1955. A "get acquainted" hour preceded a buffet supper served in the church dining room. The Rev. Oscar Good, pastor, gave the invocation and the students were welcomed by Mrs. Raymond S. Talbott, club president. Miss Huguette Reconce of France responded for the students. Mrs. W. W. Crockett of Zion was general chairman of arrangements for this, the third year of entertaining foreign students. Professor Warner Moss and Miss Margaret Pitts made the necessary arrangements at the college. The worship service on Sunday morning August 14, at Zion was conducted by Rev. Good. His sermon-topic was "Loving My Neighbor". This was a similar message to that he presented to a former student group two years ago. He said: "we should love our neighbor as ourselves. First, one should love self and family and then others. Because we love ourselves we provide food for ourselves and our families. Because we love our neighbors we help to provide food for them. Our country helps

our brothers to have food. We provide clothing for self and family. Some are cold and have scanty apparel. We should share our clothing. We have done so." He told of a letter from Germany about a coat that had been sent with an envelope concealed in the sleeve. The person who received the coat wrote back, "God bless you for what you have shared with us." Mr. Good emphasized education as the third point. He said, "Education -- we want schooling to prepare us for better service in the art of living. We want education for our children. If we want education for self and family, the love we bear toward our neighbors will cause us to help provide educational advantages for our neighbors. Fourth, a healthy body: We want healthy bodies for ourselves, our community, nation, the World; truly, 'we should love our neighbors as ourselves' for we are our brothers' keeper." His closing remarks were, "We are happy to welcome our guests today, and pray that your coming with us will be a great blessing, both to you and to us." (1)

The third annual homecoming celebration was held at Zion on May 20, 1956. It was carried out in a similar manner to the two preceding services of this kind. (2)

The Annual Virginia Conference met at Harrisonburg June 11-14, 1956 and was attended by Robert Smoot, lay delegate from Zion and by the pastor. The report showed a gain of fifteen members, making a total of 536 on the church roll; value of all church property, including the parsonage was \$231,500. The pastor's salary was \$4,500.00. The Rev. O. S. Good was again appointed pastor of Zion for the conference Year 1956-57. (3)

The seventh year of the pastorate of the Rev. Oscar Good for Zion Church began in June, 1956. The highlight of the year's work culminated in the dedication of Zion Church building. The construction of this, the third Zion Church edifice was begun in 1949. Before it was cleared of debt, a new parsonage for the use of the minister's family was built next door to the church in Seaford. The indebtedness on the two structures which were valued at \$230,000. had been reduced to \$3,000.00 by May, 1957 and this small amount was considered as parsonage debt, thus clearing the church plant of indebtedness and making it possible for the church to be dedicated. A joint Homecoming Celebration and Church Dedication service was held on Sunday May 12, 1957. Bishop Paul N. Garber, presiding Bishop of the Virginia Methodist Conference conducted the dedication ceremony and delivered the morning sermon. Dinner was served in the church social hall and on picnic tables on the lawn. The topic of the afternoon service was "Lead on, O King Eternal". (4)

The year's report showed a net loss of one, in church membership. It was: total full membership last year 536; received into membership 14 by profession of faith, 8 by transfer from other Methodist Churches, 6 by transfer from other denominations; lost by death, 5; removed to other denominations, 2; transferred to other Methodist Churches 3; removed by Quarterly Conference 19; total removed 29; total received 28, giving a total full membership of 535 members. The church expended for all purposes \$20,005.00 through the year.

The Annual Conference met in Roanoke June 10-14, 1957. The Pastor Rev. Good and the lay delegate Charles W. Mills attended the sessions. When the pastoral appointments were read it was announced that Rev. Good was re-appointed to Zion for the eighth year. The new church-year which began June 1, 1957 was already in progress when the pastor

resumed his duties June 16.

Emphasis on Christian Vocations and full-time Christian Service had been presented to the young people at Zion over the years. Some of the seeds scattered as early as 1948 bore fruit in the next ten years and the Methodist Advocate of January 30, 1958 carried on its front page a picture of five young people of Zion all of whom were college students preparing for places of responsible leadership. They were Norward P. Montgomery, Donald P. Davis, Paul Sparrer, Miss Ann Presson and Miss Louise Sparrer. The men planned to enter the ministry and the young ladies also were becoming equipped to do full-time church work. The pastor, Rev. Good was in the picture with the five young people. The men completed degree requirements at Randolph Macon College, followed by graduation and degrees from Duke Divinity School, Durham, N. C. The Rev. Norwood Montgomery and Rev. Donald Davis became members of the Virginia Methodist Conference. Rev. Paul Sparrer joined the West Pennsylvania Conference. Miss Louise Sparrer completed her A. B. degree and continued her training at Scarrett College, Nashville, Tenn. was awarded the Master's degree and was licensed in the General Conference as a Deaconness. Miss Ann Presson graduated from Longwood College, Farmville, and Duke University, and became the wife of Rev. Donald Davis.

In the Spring of 1958 the parsonage property in Grafton belonging to Zion Church was sold to the congregation of Yorkminster Presbyterian Church. A legal friendly suit was instituted in York Court to clear the parsonage property of any possible interest by parties unknown. Notice of the suit was published in the Daily Press once a week for four successive weeks, under the title "Harry L. Hoover and others, Complainants, vs. H. H. Hansford, Trustee and others, Defendants." (5)

Extensive work was done on the Zion Cemetery early in 1958. The Womans' Society of Christian Service and the cemetery committee from the Official Board cooperated in planning for a low brick wall across the front of the cemetery, and the landscaping and planting of evergreens and other shrubbery. The work was begun April 5, 1958. (6)

Beautiful sounds to the ear compare favorably with beautiful visions for the eye. This was impressively demonstrated at Zion by the installation of amplified electric chimes early in 1958. A program of inspiring music each evening reminded Mr. Lamar Stanley of Dandy to comment in his weekly column in the Daily Press: "The Bells of Zion". On hearing their music, he was reminded of a poem by the Irish priest and poet, Francis Mahoney written a century ago, "The Bells of Shandon". Mr. Stanley said: "The verse came to mind as I stood on the lawn on a quiet summer evening and listened to the chimes of Zion Church in Seaford as the music wafted across the quiet waters of Back Creek, with the shadows creeping softly out from the shore. There are pleasant water, and sounds as grand on them near at home as well as on the Emerald Isle, though we may not have, as yet, a poet to celebrate them. Beauty lies in the heart of the beholder, in the last analysis, and there are few human beings who are totally oblivious to sight and sound, though the mode of expression may vary.---- It is a pleasant thing to hear the old and familiar melodies in the voice of the bells from across the water.-----The spirit lifts a little and the day closes on a more tender note to hear the melodies of Holy, Holy, Holy, of Old Hundredth, or From Every Stormy Wind That Blows. And who is to know what comfort and cheer comes to hearts here and there as they listen to the bells. We may believe there is One who knows. It is God. Are there those who come to day's end with weary hands or burdened minds? Let the evening air breathe to them

the prayer for calm and sweet repose, Now The Day is Over. The bells of Zion, of cathedrals, of memorial towers, of memory's sacred store--what a world of peace and hope their melody foretells. (7)

The Annual Methodist Conference met June 9-12, 1958 in Richmond. Leonard E. Davis was the lay delegate. Rev. Good reported a net gain of 25 in membership -- 535 members last year, 560 members in 1958; property valued at \$232,000.; debt free. Expended during the year \$19,989.00. The Rev. Oscar Good was assigned a new pastorate in Norfolk after eight years service at Zion. The Rev. Forrest S. Wagoner was sent to Zion as it's new minister.

On Thursday, June 19, 1958 Rev. and Mrs. Wagoner and children, Forrest Jr. (called Skippy), Mary Agnes, and Jane Wagoner moved into the Zion parsonage, and the new Conference year opened with a fellowship supper that evening, welcoming the new pastor and his family. It was attended by about 75 members.

On September 3, the Zion Womans' Society of Christian Service gave a banquet honoring Zion's young people who were leaving home to attend college. Mrs. C. C. Casey of Williamsburg, Secretary of Student work for Peninsula District was the guest speaker.

The opportunity was presented to purchase from Mrs. Nelson Sears a half acre of land adjoining the church grounds, to be used, later, in a church-expansion program, as the need arose. Rev. Wagoner held a Church-wide Conference on November 16, 1958 when the members voted to buy the land at a cost of \$4,000.00.

The Annual District Conference for Peninsula Methodist Churches was held February 5, 1959 at Tabernacle Methodist Church, Poquoson. Zion Church was represented by the pastor, Rev. Wagoner, Mrs. Eli Gillikin, and several other members.

Revival services were held at Zion April 5-12 with the Rev. Traynham Topping, pastor of Chestnut Ave. Methodist Church, Newport News, as guest minister. This resulted in the addition of 19 members to the church roll. Eight infants were baptized.

The Annual Virginia Methodist Conference met in the Norfolk Arena auditorium June 8-11, 1959. Gerald Ray Hopkins, lay delegate and the pastor, Rev. Forrest Wagoner, attended. The following report was given for Zion Church: 598 total full membership, a net gain of 38; value of church property \$240,000.; no indebtedness; Rev. Wagoner was returned to Zion for his second year's ministry. (8)

The new Conference year, 1959-60 began on a progressive note with a growing membership, a debt-free church plant which, when planned ten years ago was expected to provide ample facilities for the next thirty years or longer.

A three day tour of the United Nations headquarters in New York was planned by the Peninsula District Womans' Society of Christian Service and several Zion members availed themselves of the opportunity to learn more about this avenue of World Brotherhood. Returning home, they willingly shared their knowledge and information.

Zion's pastor, Rev. Wagoner was the main Speaker at the Community Thanksgiving service held on November 25, 1959 at Grafton Christian Church.

On January 25, 1960, at a meeting of the Commission on Education at Zion, a set of drawings for a new Educational Annex was presented to the body. While no definite plans were adopted at this meeting, it became evident that a building program for additional classrooms must be started in the near future, to accomodate the expanding membership.

Robert L. Smoot, lay delegate and Mr. Wagoner, pastor, attended the Annual Virginia Methodist Conference June 13-16, 1960 in Fredericksburg. During the year 21 members had been added to the church, and the church property was valued at \$246,000.00 with no indebtedness. The pastor's salary was \$5,700.00. Total amount expended during the year was \$22,612.00. When the appointments were read for the new Conference year, 1960-61 the Rev. Forrest S. Wagoner was assigned as Zion's pastor for the third year.

Notes on Chapter 2:

- (1) Church bulletin for August 14, 1955.
Daily Press clipping
- (2) Record in the Church Visitors' Register.
- (3) Virginia Conference Annual for 1956.
- (4) Data from church bulletin May 12, 1957.
- (5) Newspaper clipping, Daily Press.
- (6) Diary.
- (7) Clipping from Daily Press, August 2, 1959.
- (8) Virginia Conference Annual 1959.

CHAPTER 3 1960-65

The general program of the church, unfolding month by month in the 1960-61 conference-year, was indicative of a keen spiritual interest of the membership and a concern for the fulfillment of Christ's command to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." In addition to the regular church activities, there was a general feeling that the time was ripe to launch another building program. The Seaford area was growing, and with this growth, Zion church would need to take on new responsibilities as to the spiritual growth of the people of the area. A building fund of nearly \$9,000.00 was raised during the year, blueprint plans were made and "on April 17, 1961 tapes were drawn and measurements were staked off for a \$90,000.00 addition to the present building. Excavation was begun and footing of steel and concrete was set. ① The plans called for a building of brick and cinder block construction 50x100 feet, two stories high.

When the Virginia Annual Methodist Conference met June 12-15, 1961 at Virginia Beach, Zion church was represented by its pastor, Rev. Forrest Wagoner and by Ashby Johnson, lay delegate. ② The report for Zion stated: "619 members at the beginning of the year, a net gain of fourteen, making a total full membership of 633; total church school membership, 503; value of church property \$236,000.00; pastor's salary, \$5800.00; total expended during the year, \$42,381.00. Rev. Wagoner was assigned to a church in Norfolk and the Rev. Harwood B. Owen was sent to Zion church, Seaford as the new minister.

A farewell reception for the out-going minister, and his family, Rev. and Mrs. Forrest S. Wagoner, Skippy, Mary Agnes and Jane, was held at Zion on Sunday evening June 18 and three happy and prosperous years of Zion's service was terminated.

On Thursday June 22, 1961 Rev. and Mrs. Harwood B. Owen moved into the parsonage to assume the pastorate of Zion Methodist Church in Seaford. ③ He found the building program going forward ahead of schedule. Henry Tyssen Sr., contractor and builder of Williamsburg and Norge was overall supervisor of construction for the new educational unit, as he had been ten years earlier when the third Zion

church building had been constructed. J. Wesley Ironmonger, great grandson of two of the original founders and trustees of Zion church, was assistant to the supervisor, as he, too, had formerly been.

A comparison of figures at that time gave an indication of Zion's financial growth. For the conference year 1950-51 the budget for York Circuit (then Providence, Crooks Memorial, and Zion) conference askings was \$5,391.00, of which Zion's proportion was \$2,533.00. ④ These figures were for conference and district work only as no budget record for local work was kept at that time. For the conference year just ended, 1960-61 these same items for Zion were \$10,576.00. The figures indicated that this church, under Divine guidance could do the things God would have it do.

On August 2, 1961 the women of the church gave a reception in honor of the new minister and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Owen. ⑤ Pictures were taken of the new educational annex, then under construction, and it was stated that the building would be ready for occupancy in mid-autumn. A later newspaper article of November 14 carried the statement that it would be ready in December. Before the end of the year some classes were moved into the new classrooms to make way for the remodeling of some of the rooms of the first unit. As these improvements took shape, classes were shifted, and a gradual occupancy took place until all classes had been accommodated by the first of the New Year 1962. In addition to the ten new classrooms, the new unit housed a social hall twice the size of the former one; a larger kitchen with all modern conveniences; restrooms; storage rooms and a most attractive, raised rostrum with adjoining dressing rooms. The room in the first unit which had been the kitchen, was remodeled to make the pastor's study, with church office joining it. The former social hall was partitioned to make a choir robing room, wardrobes, a connecting hall, and a large room designed to be a chapel. To date (1966) the chapel has not been furnished and the space is being utilized by a class of small children and as a choir-practice room.

The Crusade for Higher Education was presented at Zion and was over-subscribed.

Jordan Mitchell was Zion's Lay Delegate to the Annual Methodist Virginia Conference in 1962. It met in the Arena Auditorium of Norfolk June 11-14 and the Pastor Rev. Harwood B. Owen reported twenty-five received into membership, fourteen transferred to other Methodist Churches and seven lost by death, making a total full membership of 637, a net gain of four. Value of Church property was \$325,000.00 with an indebtedness of \$45,000. The pastor's salary was \$6,000.00; grand total paid out for the year was \$38,885.00. Rev. Owen was re-assigned to Zion as minister for the year 1962-63.

The summer of 1962 was a time of satisfaction and growth in Zion; satisfaction, because the much-needed, additional facilities for the expanding Zion church were being used to good advantage; growth because a wider program for all departments of the church was developing successfully.

The prayer group meetings sponsored by the Woman's Society of Christian Service were begun in 1962.

Open House was held at Zion just prior to Annual Conference of ___ '62 when everyone had a guided tour over the new Educational Annex. The church treasurer told of the progress of financing the expanded program.

On July 8, 1962 a handsome bronze plaque, honoring the memory of the late Rev. and Mrs. Cyrus Rosser James, was presented to the church by the children of this couple. An impressive ceremony was conducted by the pastor, Rev. Owen, with a capacity audience attending. The Rev. Mr. James was a grandson of Rev. Cyrus B. James, one of the prime leaders in the establishment of Zion church, and he went into the Methodist ministry from Zion. Rev. C. R. James was a member of the Virginia Conference and served in the itinery thirty-nine years. The plaque was erected in the church vestibule.

Youth Activities week for the whole Peninsula District was conducted in Zion's Social Hall July 16-20, 1962, with more than 200 young people in attendance.

All of the church commissions under the leadership of consecrated laymen, were functioning successfully; the Church School was alive and growing, Methodist Men's organization and the women's work through the Woman's Society of Christian Service,

were actively engaged in the church's program.

Through the late summer of 1962 the York County School Board approached the Zion Official Board with the proposition of renting the new educational unit and several rooms in unit number one, in which to house the Seaford elementary school for the year September 1962 - June 1963. The necessity for this move was the result of some unavoidable delay in the progress of the building program for the new Seaford School plant. Zion church rendered this service to the community and county and about 200 public school children used Zion church as their "school" for the nine-month's session.

The Peninsula District Conference met at Zion January 17, 1963 with Dr. R. Orman Bryant, District Superintendent presiding. The thirty-one churches of the district were represented by both pastors and laymen.

When the Annual Virginia Conference met at Virginia Beach June 10-13, 1963 Grady L. Montgomery, lay delegate for Zion, and the pastor, Rev. H.B. Owen attended. A summary of the year's work at Zion listed a net gain in membership of eighteen. The church property was valued at \$285,000.00 for the church buildings, equipment and land; \$40,000.00 for the parsonage and \$1500. for other property, a total of \$326,500.00. The indebtedness was \$36,000. Rev. Mr. Owen was again assigned to Zion as its pastor for 1963-64, being his third year at Zion.

By the time Annual Conference came to a close at Virginia Beach, and the delegates and pastor returned to Seaford, the public school session had closed, school furniture was removed from Zion church educational department, the church's class-room furniture was taken out of storage, and following a good cleaning, painting and renovation period, the church was restored to its former status. Immediately, Vacation Bible School opened, and all activities connected with the church's full program went forward. ⁽⁶⁾ A Boy Scout troop, Girl Scouts and Brownies were sponsored by Zion church and held their meetings in its Social Hall and classrooms. The church program at Zion in the summer of 1963 was varied and wide. Dr. Blackemore, of the Conference Board of Education presented a service on June 30th. The church instituted nursery service during the morning worship and when-ever special meetings

were held. The Sunday School picnic was carried out at Jamestown 4 H. Camp and was a real family-styled outing, emphasizing "the family that plays together, stays together." A most impressive vesper service was held at river's edge, as the sun seemed to go beyond the James.

Monthly meetings of the Commission on Education kept the school program supplied with all the new helps for teaching and learning.

Revival services were held at Zion - September 29 through October 4, with Dr. Carl Sanders of Richmond as the guest minister. His sermon each evening was inspiring and well presented and the church was much benefitted by his services. Layman's Day was celebrated in October; Dr. R. O. Bryant, District Superintendent visited Zion the last Sunday in October; special Thanksgiving Services were held the last week in November. Christmas was celebrated with class parties in the social hall, worship service and Christmas Cantata in the Sanctuary, and a Christmas Birthday reception on Christmas Sunday evening in the social hall. A Student Recognition Service was held on December 29.

In January - February 1964 the church-wide Mission Study Class was held on Sunday evenings and Family Night was celebrated the first Sunday evening in each month. These activities and others, point up the community-wide service rendered by Zion church.

The Annual Virginia Methodist Conference met June 8-11, 1964 in Roanoke. (7) Zion was represented by Robert Smoot, lay delegate and the pastor Rev. Herwood Owen. Statistics of the Conference listed Zion with a membership of 689, a net gain of 34 members over the previous year's membership. Sunday School enrollment was 567. The church property was valued at \$333,250.00 with \$36,000 indebtedness. The pastor's salary and travel expense was \$6300.00. Total paid out (not total raised) was \$33,547. Again Rev. H. B. Owen, "Stoney" as he was affectionately called, was returned to Zion to serve a fourth year.

To record here the many and varied activities that took place at Zion because of it's many-faceted program during the 1964-65 church year would be, more or less, a repetition of the previous year with perhaps additional service items. The

average attendance of 300 at the worship services was recorded; eleven babies were baptized; nine funerals were conducted at Zion during the year and several marriages were solemnized and wedding receptions held. These vital services rendered to residents of the area, bore mute testimony of the power for good that Zion church had exerted during the year.

Statistics from the Annual Conference, held June 7-10, 1965 at Virginia Beach show continued growth and progress at Zion. Dr. Walter Cum, the new Bishop of the Virginia Methodist Conference, presided over the Conference. Zion's total church property value was listed as \$373,750.00, the indebtedness was \$30,000; pastor's salary and traveling expense was \$6,500. Total amount expended through Zion for the year was \$37,550. Membership figures carried 689 members at the beginning of the year and 732 members at the close of the year, a net gain of 43 members. The Sunday School enrollment was 612. Grady L. Montgomery, Lay Delegate and the pastor Rev. H. B. Owen were Zion's representatives at the Conference. He was re-appointed to Zion to be it's pastor for the fifth year.

The middle of June 1965, and a new Conference year already in progress, found Zion's summer plans for it's children, already engaged in an educational, recreational and inspirational program through its Vacation Bible School, which served about 135 children.

For the teen-age group a part-time supervised recreation plan was devised, with volunteer help and some salaried assistance. The spiritual emphasis was not overshadowed by the physical.

Classes in church membership gave to children and young people an insight in both Methodist church-doctrine and Methodist church-government.

The year 1966 was recognized at Zion as the bi-centennial year of Methodism in the United States; Heritage Sunday was observed and a call to prayer was issued from the pulpit, through the Methodist Men's group, and by the Woman's Society.

At the final meeting in May of the Official Board, just prior to Annual Conference in 1966 a glowing account was given regarding certain new facilities for comfort and beauty - comfort of the parishioners and beauty of the sanctuary.

New nylon carpeting of the sanctuary, including the balcony and stairs leading thereto, and valued at more than \$2,000.00 was laid. Two hundred new hymnals were ordered, to arrive by the first of the 1966 Conference year. Negotiations had been completed to have ~~an~~ air-condition facilities installed in the sanctuary. The church school enrollment was reported as 640. A large, framed directory was hung in the hallway of the educational unit which listed the assignment of rooms to twenty-one classes as follows: Nursery no. 1 for two year olds; Nursery no. 2 for the three-year olds; kindergarten no. 1 for four-year olds; kindergarten no. 2 for the five-year olds; the grades from first through sixth grade were for children of the ages six years through twelve years. These made up the children's division. The youth division included grades seven through ten and were classed as junior high; grades eleven and twelve were combined in one class as the senior high group. The adult division covered the Wesley Young Adult Class; the Friendship; Builders; Fellowship, Ladies Bible Class and the Men's Bible Class. Each class was staffed with a teacher and an assistant teacher.

Officers and workers for 1966-67 were elected at the fourth quarterly conference May 4, at Zion, when Dr. R. O. Bryant conducted the final conference of his six-year tenure of office. Those elected: Church lay leader, J. R. Mitchell; Trustees: H. H. Hansford, C. W. Mills, G. L. Montgomery, G. S. Montgomery, Harvey Shields, G. B. Sparrer, E. E. White, William S. Wornom.

Stewards: R. L. Anderson, Larry Childers, J. T. Crockett, W. T. Crockett, A. L. Davis, L. E. Davis, Mrs. H. C. DeAlba, M. E. Anderson, Raymond Forrest, R. S. Forrest, A. L. Fox, C. A. Gurtler, R. H. Hansford, V. A. Hansford, C. B. Keith, C. J. Hogg, J. T. Hogge, Jr., G. R. Hopkins, T. T. Ironmonger, A. F. Johnson, J. G. Lowry, R. E. Mathis, C. W. Mills, G. W. Mills, J. H. Mitchell, Jr., G. L. Montgomery, G. S. Montgomery, O. P. Montgomery, A. T. Moreland, A. G. Page, R. Nelson Sears, C. W. Shields, Harvey Shields, R. B. Smoot, J. W. Sparrer, T. E. Sparrer, W. H. Sparrer, D. B. Wainwright, S. E. Westcott, B. C. Wyatt, Leslie Crowwell, Julius Harris and Norman Rush.

Commission on Membership and Evangelism: Mrs. R. L. Anderson, Chairman;

Commission on Education: Mrs. Eli Gillikin, Chairman; Commission on Missions: Mr. R. L. Anderson, Chairman; Commission on Stewardship and Finance: J. G. Lowry, Chairman; Roy Mathis, vice-chairman; Commission on Christian Social Concerns: Mrs. A. L. Fox, Chairman; Commission on Worship: Mrs. Pearl Morse, Chairman. There were six or more members on each commission. Other church officers elected were: J. G. Lowry, Secretary of Stewardship; Communion stewards, C. W. Mills and Larry Childers; lay member to Board of Missions, F. W. Mills; Committee on wills and legacies, Mrs. W. S. Wornom; Committee on Family Life, Mrs. C. A. Gurtler and Mrs. C. J. Hogg; Committee on Records and History, Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger and Mrs. W. S. Wornom; Committee on Policy, Harvey Shields, Chairman; Committee on Christian Vocations, Mrs. J. G. Lowry, Chairman; Committee on Pastoral Relations, Roy Mathis, Chairman; Key Woman to Heritage Guild, Mrs. C. W. Mills; Committee on Audit: A. G. Page, Mrs. John Smith and Mrs. M. W. Gayle.

Roy Mathis, Chairman of Zion's Official Board and Lay Delegate, accompanied Rev. and Mrs. Owen to the Annual Methodist Conference which convened in the Municipal Arena of Norfolk June 13-16, 1966. The report of Zion's membership of 732 at the beginning of the year, grown to 765 at its close, revealed a net gain of 33 members. Total expended during the year was \$43,715.00.

When the appointments were read for the church year of 1966-67 Rev. H.B. Owen, Zion's minister for the past five years, was sent to a church in Norfolk and the Rev. J. T. Scarborough was assigned to Zion.⁽⁷⁾ With a membership of 765, a church plant valued at \$373,750., and all Commissions and Committees in the hands of dedicated, active laymen a year of service progress and blessing was anticipated.

The Pastor, Chairman, and Members of the Official Board were grateful for the opportunity to make Zion Church live up to its great heritage of service.

God has richly blessed Zion. It is our prayer that He will take our efforts in His Kingdom and continue to bless them to His Honor and Glory.

Nov. 2, 1966.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 3.

- ① Clipping from Daily Press April 17, 1961.
- ② Virginia Methodist Conference Annual 1961.
- ③ Diary.
- ④ Zion Brochure 1961-62.
- ⑤ Newspaper clipping, Daily Press Aug. 6, 1961.
- ⑥ Desk Book record 1963.
- ⑦ Virginia Methodist Conference Annual 1964.
- ⑧ Virginia Methodist Conference Annual 1965.
- ⑨ Virginia Methodist Conference Annual 1966.

APPENDIX - GIFTS TO ZION CHURCH

1885 - A small cabinet. Hand made by Mr. William Tigner. Used in the second Zion Church building in which to keep a small money box, collection plates, hymn books, some additional Sunday School cards, etc. Moved into the vestibule of the third Zion Church building in 1951.

1866 - 90. Marble top table. Some time between these dates it was placed in the old Zion Church to be used in communion service. Moved into the new church vestibule in 1951; then placed in the church parlor in 1965.

1895 - Silver Communion Service, already mentioned.

1919 - The Silver Individual Communion Service; given by Mr. and Mrs. James Cheadle, already mentioned.

1920 - The Pulpit Bible. Given by a class of small girls, taught by Miss Annie Belle Sparrer.

1920 - The Communion Table. Given by a class of twenty-five teen-age boys, called Boy's Brotherhood; taught by Mrs. Bessie Ironmonger (Mrs. J. W.)

1920 - Two Brass Chinese Antique Vases; given by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hornsby in memory of their little daughter, Frances L. Hornsby.

1932 - Painted Picture of Christ. Presented by Miss Bernyce Craft and her father of Clifton Forge. It was hung in the pulpit of the former Zion Church building. In 1951 it was hung in the new church vestibule.

1939 - The American Flag and the Christian Flag. Two large silk flags, edge in fringe; with metal staffs topped with insignia, and sturdy metal bases, gift of Seaford Woman's Club.

1940 - Two Magnolia Trees. Given by Seaford Woman's Club; planted in Zion Church cemetery.

1941 - Brass Altar Cross, Gift of Seaford Woman's Club.

1941 - Hymnals. In May, 125 Methodist Church hymnals were given to Zion Church by about 100 members, as memorials to loved ones. Rev. Otis Clarke was pastor and dedicated the gift.

ca. 1946 - Two Wrought-iron Seven branch candelabra. Two Footed Flower Baskets to Match. Given by a Young girls' class, honoring their teacher, Mrs. Lillian Foster.

1950-51. Gift Labor. In constructing the Third Zion Church-building much gift labor was used, the value of which could not be estimated. Nor could the names of all who made such a contribution be ascertained. Such carpenter-work as trimming out the interior, laying hardwood floors, stairways and trim, setting windows, hanging doors etc plumbing and wiring work, such as electrical wiring and fixture installations; interior decorating, such as varnishing, painting etc, -- these gifts of labor were contributions not to be overlooked or under-estimated. To all who assisted, this acknowledgement was offered, with the suggestion that each one realize that he had been included, even though no names had been inscribed.

1951 - Eight X Stained Glass Windows.

1. Given by Mrs. J. Tyler Crockett and daughters in memory of J. T. Crockett;
2. Given by Mrs. Grace Acree Jones, in memory of Mrs. Catherine Acree White;
3. Given by the family of Mrs. Josephine I. Purgold memorializing Mrs. Purgold;
4. Given by the family of Mrs. Hunter Wornom Shield in memory of Mrs. Shield;
5. Given by Mrs. Lillian Foster and Mrs. Edna Eure, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Ferdinand Crockett;
6. Given by Mrs. Berenyce Whitehead and Mrs. Elcyce Topping, memorializing their parents, James W. Dawson and Irene Shield Dawson
7. Given by the family of Rev. John T. Mills and Mrs. Lottie Mills.
8. Given by the family of William Thomas Sparrer in memory of Mr. Sparrer.

1951 - Library Table. Placed in the church parlor. Given by Mrs. C. E. Crockett.

1951 - Lectern in M. Y. F. room. Given to Zion's Young People by the Dandy

Chapel. It was first owned by Providence Methodist Church, Dare, who gave it to Dandy Chapel when Providence was rebuilt. When members of the Dandy Sunday school renovated the Chapel, they passed on the lectern to Zion's Youth group.

1951- Twenty-four Church Pews.

1. In memory of Mrs. I. W. Sparrer, and in honor of Mr. I. W. Sparrer;
2. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Sparrer;
3. In memory of Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Mills;

4. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Mills Sr;
5. In honor of Dr. and Mrs. L. O. Powell;
6. In memory of Mrs. J. W. Sparrer;
7. In memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Hornsby, Sr. ;
8. In memory of G. A. Wornom and in honor of Mrs. G. A. Wornom;
9. In memory of Mrs. Sadie Ironmonger Teagle and Mrs. Edna Estelle Sparrer.
10. In memory of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Mills;
11. In memory of Mrs. G. F. Hogg and son Paul;
12. In memory of Mr. Seymour Dawson and in honor of Mrs. Berenyce Whitehead;
13. In memory of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Smith;
14. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Sparrer;
15. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Grady L. Montgomery;
16. In memory of Mrs. S. R. Dawson;
17. In memory of Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Shields;
18. In memory of Mr. J. L. Corckett and in honor of Mrs. J. L. Crockett;
19. In memory of Mrs. Martha L. Sparrer;
20. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. White;
21. In memory of James W. Sparrer;
22. In honor of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Mills;
23. In memory of Mrs. Lillian Foster;
24. In honor of Mrs. L. S. Hansford. Given by their families.

1952. Spinnet Piano. Given by Boys' Brotherhood class; Placed in Zion Sanctuary in 1952; later placed in Chapel space and used for choir practice.

1954 - Baptismal Font. Given in memory of Mrs. Leona Hansford by her nieces; already mentioned.

195- Two Altar Candle holders. Massive; brass; matching the brass Altar Cross. Given by the children of Mrs. C. E. Crockett in memory of her.

1962 - Four Collection Plates. Given by the children of Mr. C. E. Crockett in memory of him.

1963 - Brass Plaque. In memory of the Rev. and Mrs. Cyrus Rosser James, by their children (already mentioned).

1964. Brass Flower Container. Given in honor of the fifty-fifth wedding anniversary

of Mr. and Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger by their three children.

1965. Display Cabinet. For Zion's mementos. Given by Mrs. Lewis E. Davis in memory of her husband, Mr. Davis. (Already mentioned).

1965. Oldest Minutes Book and Bible restored and leather-bound given by Mr. and Mrs. J. Wesley Ironmonger. (Already mentioned).

1965 - Five Volumes of Church Bulletins, Bound in leather and placed in church library by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ironmonger.

If any have been omitted or overlooked, it was an error of the head and not of the heart.